

What to do if you know someone who is suffering:

We all want to help. It's a natural human response. However, sometimes our discomfort with the suffering of others gets us in the "fix it" mode. The people who have been affected by the recent events in Walker/Coleville, Bridgeport and Swall Meadows (residents, First Responders, County staff working in shelters, etc.) will have a story to tell. The best medicine is to listen. Deeply listen. We tend to try and "solve the problem" or give advice when we feel helpless. What people need from us is support—the listening and empathetic kind. Of course, if they say, "Hey can you help me figure out how to get a new truck," then advice is what they need. But if they are just standing there, looking overwhelmed and dazed or start to cry in your presence, a hug and a willing ear goes a long, long way:

Do say, "I'm so sorry."

Don't say, "Everything will be okay."

Do say, "This totally sucks"

Don't say, "The best thing is to move on"

Do say, "Tell me what you miss the most so far. Tell me what happened."

Don't say, "Well it could have been worse. At least no one died."

Do say, "How did you find out? Tell me the story."

Don't say, "You can rebuild" OR "You can always get another pet"

Do say, "What have you lost?"

Don't say, "I know what you are going through"

Do say, "I'll keep in touch (and do). What can I help you with right now (and then do it)"

This is the time to bring our best selves forward. Be kind. Bare witness. Be compassionate. Don't try to fix anything; you can't. Do show up, maybe be quiet, and let your friends, loved ones, strangers, neighbors tell you their story. That is the biggest gift you have to offer.

If you have any questions or concerns, call:

Mono County Behavioral Health

760-924-1740